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LETTER

TO THE

SOCIETY

OF

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS,

AT THE

OCTAGON,

IN

LIVERPOOL.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N :

Printed for G. KEITH, in *Grace-church-street*.

M.DCC.LXVI.

(Price Six-pence.)

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THE SECOND EDITION

LONDON

Printed for G. Martin, in Church-yard-lane

MDCCLXXXV

(Price 2s. 6d.)



GENTLEMEN,

HOWEVER this unexpected address may surprise you, its propriety you will not be at a loss to determine. For to whom can an appeal be more properly made on a point of christian practice and worship, than to you; who invite every kind and candid assistance to the execution of your pious plan of improving and purifying the worship of God. To you I can be bold to address myself, presuming on your religious character and conduct, that I shall meet with a favourable attention and candid notice.

To search the Scriptures, to prove every sentiment and practice by that unerring standard of truth, to approve the things which are excellent, to adhere to the authority and dictates of Christ alone, in matters of religion, this is a duty, which I persuade myself you think it your honour to discharge; and that you can do it under the auspices of this benign period, without any injury to your persons or substance, is undoubtedly

doubtedly your great privilege. The subjects of religious enquiry are so many and various; the progress in knowledge and truth necessarily gradual and slow, liable to frequent interruptions, perplexed with the intricacies of controversy, and checked by the prejudices of novelty and antiquity, or of custom and Authority; so that the discovery of truth in any one instance is the work of time, and of frequently renewed deliberation and thought. Hence it is not to be wondered at, if the freest and most generous minds cannot, or do not entirely, and in every Instance, rescue themselves from the shackles of superstition and error. On this account, I presume, that possibly you, Gentlemen, have not canvassed every point of religious debate and study; nor sifted into the grounds of every tenet and rite, which has received the sanction of general practice and belief, and of publick authority. On the same account, I am persuaded that this supposition will not offend you; but that as friends to truth alone, you will readily catch the hint and ask, what theme next demands your attention? What tenet, what practice remains for your scrutiny, either upon a Review to receive the countenance of a more deliberate approbation, or to be discarded and rejected?

Here allow me to propose to your review a point of christian practice; which it will be supposed you have maturely, impartially and seriously examined, whenever, in consequence of your plan for the improvement of the worship of God, the world shall be favoured with new services for the administration of

Baptism

Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The former of these rites is the subject, into which I beg leave to excite and intreat your fair and candid scrutiny and enquiry. It is reasonable to suppose that the other points, which relate to the worship of God; if not this, have already passed under your examination. The next article of religious worship, which you propose to regulate by the declarations of the new testament, is, Baptism. To rescue religious worship from those corruptions, with which it has been mixed, and to form a plan of devotion agreeable to the simplicity and purity of the Gospel is a noble design, a design worthy of the constant attention of all who consult the glory of God, the honour of their master or their own improvement in piety and virtue. This design charity teaches us, is your Aim. Go on, Sirs, to prosecute this honourable and useful scheme! As your plan is filled up, may it recommend itself by its increasing purity and perfection! This enlightened age is not entirely free from corruption. May you search out the nature and sources of these corruptions! And may a further reformation be the object of your pious ambition and pursuit!

As to baptism, you will naturally be led to examine the usual practice of Protestants and Dissenters by the records of the New Testament, to discover whether the subjects, the qualifications and the manner of administering it with them, are consonant to its instructions; if not, our usual custom must be looked upon as a corruption of the christian ordinance; against which every rati-

onal and consistent Christian should bear his protest: This is certainly a matter that deserves our attention and enquiry. Let it not be objected against such an enquiry; that the subject of it is a point only of an external and ritual nature.

For let us consider! Is it not the incumbent duty of Christians to guard against error and superstition in *every* respect? Is not the worship of God to be preserved pure and uncorrupted in *every* article? because it carries not with it the *bighest* obligation and importance: has it therefore *no* importance, *no* weight? Yes, certainly: from the authority of God it derives an obligation not to be resisted, and a degree of Importance, that is not to be slighted. Whatever rite his name and authority makes venerable and binding claims our obedience; but then, if in our conduct we change and alter this rite, if we vary and differ from the original model, *so far as* we vary and differ from God's appointment, *so far as* the rite is altered and changed; *so far* it ceases to be God's rite, and becomes an institution of our own. here let us pause. Whether to *annul* the law of God altogether is not a direct opposition to his authority, we cannot doubt. Is it not a point equally clear, that to *add* to it, and to *mend* it, is arrogance and superstition? The apparent Innocence, harmlessness, or even usefulness of these additions and emendations can not justify, or excuse them: For not to observe that this is to reflect upon the wisdom of God, as if it was not equal to the perfection of his own institutions. This Conduct in Religion opens
a wide

a wide door for every kind of superstition, and all the various inventions of men in the worship of God. Since if *our* opinion of the usefulness and propriety of it will justify the introduction of *one* new rite, or the *alteration* of any of God's ordinances; it will justify the use of a *thousand new rites*, and the *entire change* of God's appointment for our own. Therefore, there is no method of maintaining the simplicity and purity of the divine institution, but by a conscientious and strict adherence to the original models, precepts and examples. And undoubtedly, one reason of God's appointing any rites, and ascertaining and fixing the end and design of these rites, was to prevent the follies of superstition, and to guard his worship by those sacred boundaries, which his wisdom directed, against the inventions of Men.

This reasoning is sufficient to excite our zealous attachment to God's ordinances according to their primitive models; supposing that these ordinances possessed no intrinsic excellency and use. But let us attend to it; is *this* the case with christian Baptism? No: This ordinance is in an affecting manner *significant* and *expressive*; as it is a badge of our christian profession. It denotes our belief of Christ's burial and resurrection, our submission to his authority, our resolutions to die unto Sin, and to walk in newness of life. A profession of our religion made by the serious, deliberate and voluntary use of a rite supported by the clear sanction of a divine command has an evident and strong tendency

to fix the virtuous resolution in the heart; to impress the mind deeply with all the obligations of the christian character; to excite an enquiry into the attestations and proofs of our Lord's mission; and to strike and affect the heart of every observer, so as to raise their attention to our religion, and to leave in their breasts a devout and reverent regard to the divine appointments. Thus it is constituted a branch of the *religion* of the *means*. Thus it possesses an importance and value of the same nature with that, which we are accustomed to affix to prayer and the Lord's Supper, and the worship of God through a mediator. For the value of all these duties arises from their tendency to cherish and strengthen those dispositions and habits; which render us acceptable to God, amiable in ourselves, and useful to others. This is the tendency of Baptism. Is it not then entitled to our regard and esteem on the *same account*; which renders *the other* instrumental duties of religion rational and useful?

These considerations, it is presumed, will be sufficient to awaken your regard to, and candid consideration of the following Letters; which have all appeared in our common channels of information and news; and which are now thus reprinted, to excite an enquiry into a point that the generality even of the religious and the good seem either to embrace without any scruples of its divine original and Authority; or about which they are indifferent, as the subject is only of a ritual nature. The second letter, occasioned by the first

first, offers some arguments as does the third, to invalidate the common practice of Infant-Baptism. The candid and impartial will judge of their force and strength: To them the appeal is made, concerning the merits of the cause.

Depending, Gentlemen, on your candid and unbiassed attention; permit me to lay before you, and, by your means, to offer again to the public these fugitive pieces. Subjoining this interesting prayer. That candor and meekness may sweeten all religious debate; that truth may be the end of our enquiries; that those sentiments and practices may daily prevail more and more, which, however contrary to our present opinion and conduct, are founded in the word of God, and are supported by clear and convincing evidence.

I am,

Gentlemen,

With great Respect and Affection,

In our common Lord,

Your Friend and humble Servant,

The AUTHOR.

But, if some arguments are done the mind
to investigate the common ground of human nature
the mind will be brought to the point of view
the mind will be brought to the point of view
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To the Printer of the *General Evening Post*.

SIR,

As an advocate of the christian world,
the following Letter craves a place in your
General Evening Post. The propriety of
chusing that canal of conveyance to the
eye of the public, you will instantly dis-
cern.

A Letter to Dr. John Gill, on his late
Publication.

To the Rev. John Gill, D. D.

SIR,

Casting mine eye over the advertisements
in the General Evening Post of the 3d instant,
I read one with your name affixed, which
greatly

greatly surprized me. It lies in an extract made to the preface of your book against infant-baptism, and is as follows. “ The Pæ-
 “ dobaptists are ever restless and uneasy, en-
 “ deavouring to maintain and support, if pos-
 “ sible, their *unscriptural practice* of infant-
 “ baptism: tho’ it is no other than a pillar
 “ of popery; that by which antichrist has
 “ spread his baneful influence over many na-
 “ tions; is the basis of national churches and
 “ worldly establishments; that which unites
 “ the church and the world, and keeps them
 “ together; nor can there be a full seperation
 “ of the one from the other, nor a tho-
 “ rough reformation in religion, untill it is
 “ wholly removed; and though it has so
 “ long and largely obtained and still does ob-
 “ tain: I believe with a firm and unshaken
 “ faith, that the time is hastening on, when
 “ infant-baptism will be no more practised in
 “ the world, when churches will be formed
 “ on the same plan they were in the times
 “ of the apostles, when gospel doctrine and
 “ discipline will be restored to their primitive
 “ lustre and purity, when the ordinances
 “ of baptism and the Lord’s supper will be
 “ administered as they were at first delivered,
 “ clear of all present corruption and supersti-
 “ tion; all which will be accomplished, *when*
 “ *the Lord shall be king over all the earth;*
 “ *and there shall be one Lord and his name one.*”

Good doctor, let me reason a little with you: I will ask you a few questions. Who made you a judge or a standard of religious conduct to *Pædobaptists*? Is there nothing insolent and arrogant in your charging them with an *un-*

C

scriptural

scriptural practice, in baptizing their children? Have they not the bible in their hands as well as you? And have they not as much right to form a judgment for themselves, both of the nature of christian baptism and of the proper subjects of it? Have they not often told you, they are persuaded, that *Infant-Baptism* is of apostolical original? That when the gospel was first published upon the heads of families professing their faith, immediately their whole households were entitled to baptism? They reasonably suppose young children in such households; and you content yourself with the less reasonable conclusion. Have they not told you, that for eight or nine centuries, the infant-right of christian parents to baptism was never called in question? And, can you shew, there is any fallacy in their reasoning; that had infants been excluded baptism, the Jews must have taken great offence at the rite of initiating into the christian covenant? Since they had always been parties in the Abrahamic and mosaic covenants; they have as much as ever a natural right to the privileges of the gospel covenant, as well as their parents. The faith of their parents, we say, is the foundation of that their right: And so we conclude the apostles thought as well as we; else they would not have baptized *households* on the profession of faith made by the heads of them. But, that we might be at no loss, the faith of the head, whether it was *male* or a female head, conveyed that right equally to the house-

household. So the *Jailor* and *Lydia*, *Crispus* and *Gaius*, with the household of *Stephanas* also.

You have been told, doctor, that we baptizers of infants are so far from thinking you able to prove us *unscriptural* in our practice, that we have never once seen the adult-baptizer produce either *precept* or *precedent* for his refusing baptism to his infant-children; and for bringing them to manhood in the christian profession unbaptized. If scripture, or any authentic history of the primitive ages of christianity, did shew any such custom among the first christians; it is supposed the argument would have been urged long before this time, by the adult-baptizer. And, if baptism does initiate into the gospel covenant, we are tempted to think, it is not so right in you, to refuse to initiate your children. Christian-Baptism, we are persuaded, is what *begins* a profession; your children are not baptized till a great many years after they have made the profession. We are therefore inclined to conclude, that you have widely mistaken the design of Baptism, in the manner of applying the rite. You, verily, seem to make it a confirming, rather than an *initiating* ordinance.

How it comes to run in your head, doctor that *Infant-Baptism* is the pillar of popery, the basis of national churches and worldly establishments, which unite the church and the world, is very unaccountable; and, methinks, would afford some entertaining speculations, if you would favour the world with some of

your curious lucubrations upon it. One would not doubt, but your great talents would render you as capable of displaying the evidence, with as much address, as you have in one tract exhibited, *The doctrine of the Cherubim*, and in another, *The doctrine of the wheels in the vision of Ezekiel*. Indeed, I should be apt to conclude, you would find the subject altogether as visionary.

It would be superfluous, lost labour to attempt a disturbance of your firm and unshaken faith, "Of the time hastening on, "when infant-baptism will be no more practised in the world," Do you conclude this, doctor, from the world's becoming less decent and more indelicate? If you ask, why I put this question, it is, verily, because of your *mode* of baptizing. I can never be persuaded that plunging could be apostolical; and I will give you this reason for it among others, the *purifying* either by water, or by blood, was always by *sprinkling*; and never by immersion, under the mosaic dispensation.

What your ideas are of the time, "*When the Lord shall be king over all the earth, and there shall be one Lord, and his name one,*" I am not able to say; but, if it should have such an imagery belonging to it, as the *Millenarians* have fondly fancied, there will then be no occasion at all for the one, or the other.

But,

But upon a close examination of this *Extract* from your preface, what are the conclusions which you would have mankind draw from your account of baptism? If you do not chuse to speak out, doctor, I will, for once, be Balaam's ass, and speak for the prophet. You would have it thought, that *wisdom* dwells only with adult-baptizers, that all the world but yourselves are in a manifest, capital error; that baptism, performed at adult-age and by plunging, is that, without which no *reformation* can ever be attainable. Have a little patience, doctor, whilst I tell you, that BIGOTRY has a very hospitable reception with you: she feasts herself in your tabernacles. Strange it is, but as true it is, the best natured adult-baptizer loses temper whenever he is confronted, and employs his attention to baptism,

A discernment of this, occasioned the venerable Mr. *Emlyn* to publish his previous question. I remember to have asked him his reason, he told me, "He did it to abate the confidence, and damp the fire of the adult-baptizers." Upon a careful review, I would advise Dr. *Gill* not to publish this *extract* any more, and to expunge it from the *preface* he has written, unless he be determined to continue his contemptuous claims to infallibility.

I am,

The Doctor's humble,

Tho' unchristian Servant,

A Pædobaptist.

October 7, 1765.

P. S. The doctor will not think it of any importance that I give him my name, since I do not remark on him as a private person, but as an advocate for the christian world, whom he has most uncharitably excluded the christian church.

L E T T E R II.

To the *Printer* of the *General Evening Post*.

S I R,

The enclosed letter begs the favour of being conveyed to the public by the means of your paper, and it will lay an obligation on your humble servant,

The Author.

To a Pædobaptist.

S I R,

Your animadversions on an advertisement of Dr. Gill's, in the *General Evening-Post* for the 12th instant, have produced this address. The author of it is an entire stranger to the doctor, and craves your attention for a moment, only from a regard to the momentous interests of christian benevolence and truth. You cannot be insensible, Sir, to the importance of a spirit of candor, forbearance

Forbearance and meekness in a christian; since a breach of these amiable duties, in your apprehension, gave rise to your strictures; most reasonable then was the expectation and hope, that you would have guarded against the *appearances* of the opposite temper. But, with concern, I must observe, that you offend against this temper in almost the very same instances, which you condemn in the doctor. He charges the *Pædobaptists* with an *unscriptural practice*: This you think a just subject of your repentment; and how do you resent it? but by *retorting* the charge. "We (say you) have never seen the adult-baptizer produce either *precept* or *precedent*; for his refusing baptism to his infant children."

You are disgusted with the doctor for considering and representing your practice as the pillar of popery, and the basis of national churches and worldly establishments. But, what can be supposed to raise a greater disgust, or to give a greater shock to a devout mind, whose reverential regard to the authority of Christ is the cause of his attachment to the mode of immersion, than that severe and ungenerous reflection which you so plainly insinuate, when you ask the doctor, whether he derives his hopes of the growing reception of his sentiments, "from the world's becoming less decent and more indelicate?" And surely you cannot allow yourself thus to offend any honest, upright, humble christian.

As to your general and universal charge of bigotry against the adult-baptizer: would to God! there was not too much reason to return it on the Pædobaptists: whose zeal, when this point is the object of it, too often transgresses the bounds of candor and moderation. May the period hasten! when the spirit of love will glow in the bosoms of every party of christians, and warm their breasts with the benevolent ambition of rivaling each other in every kind, candid and good natured virtue.

To these strictures on the manner and spirit, in which you animadverted on the doctor, allow me to subjoin some remarks on the subject, in answer to yours.

Has not the apostle, Sir, assured us, that there is but *one baptism*? What one single determinate meaning and design then does baptism bear in the new testament? In the new testament precepts, does it denote and signify a personal profession of faith in Christ?*

Or

* Agreeable to this idea of baptism, you assert as the general persuasion of the Pædobaptists, that this Ordinance is what *begins a profession*. Now, Sir, do but adhere to this idea and notion of christian-baptism; and judge who mistake the design of Baptism: Whether *they*, who administer it as the rite, by which we profess our faith in Christ? Or *they*, who use it as a right by which they devote their children to God, and enter into a vow for their religious education? Whether *they* mistake the design of the ordinance (which *you* in the name of the Pædobaptists, say, begins a *profession*) who administer it to subjects; that by the use of their understanding, their faith and devout affections *can* and *do* by it, make

Or a token and memorial of God's favour to believers and children; or a devout dedication of children to the care of God, and the patronage of the redeemer? *Which* of these designs and ends of baptism does the evangelical history countenance? Or does it countenance all of them? Has the passage been ever produced, where it evidently; clearly and expressly, or even by inference and deduction, conveys the *two latter* of these intentions? If it has not, by what authority do we apply baptism to any other use, or any other view, than that single view it bears through all the new testament, as an acknowledgement of our faith in Christ.

D

You

a *profession* of Christ's authority and character: Or, they, who administer it to Subjects that *cannot* exercise any one act of the mind necessary to a profession of any sentiment; nor are in the least degree sensible of the design of the rite imposed upon them. If it *begin a profession*, and infants are incapable of professing any thing; if they are made the subjects of it; the design of the ordinance is mistaken and perverted. If it *begin a Profession*; it cannot be consistently observed by any, till they arrive at understanding to know the meaning and to discern the reasonableness of this profession: and according to your own declaration, that this rite *begins* a profession: whenever it is used; the profession is *begun*, and *not before*; for tho' persons grow up in the knowledge of the christian faith, and for a great many years attend the worship of christian societies; yet, they cannot properly, nor according to the intention and command of Christ have made a profession of the christian faith, till they have submitted to Baptism: *because*, Sir, as you have plainly told us, this rite *begins* a profession. So that upon your own principles, it is an *initiating* ordinance, though administered late in life.

You and your friends, Sir, “reasonably” suppose that there were children in the “households” mentioned in the Acts; but, is *supposition*, is a *conclusion* drawn merely from the word *household* (which if it ever does, certainly sometimes does *not* include children) to be the rule of our faith and practice in a point, which can depend solely on the authority of Jesus Christ? Are our suppositions and conclusions to be substituted instead of the commands and directions of our Lord? You cannot think so: Besides, Sir, once more consult the histories of those households; especially of *Cornelius* and the Jailor; the members of which, who were baptized, are likewise said to hearken to the word, to believe, to rejoice and to receive the Holy Spirit? are these things to be understood of infants?

As to your argument from the practice of circumcision under the Abrahamic and Mosaic dispensations: * You need not be informed

* “Since they had always been parties in the *Abrahamic* and in the *Mosaic* covenants, they have as much as ever, a natural right to the privileges of the gospel covenant, as well as their parents.” On this arguing, I beg leave to observe, (1.) That it is founded on a mistaken principle; since under no religious dispensation, either parents or children can claim the blessings of it, as *their* natural right; because the constitution of those dispensations with the various privileges and immunities thereof, flows from the mere favour, good pleasure and free Mercy of God. (2.) If this reasoning holds in the present case good; it will with equal strength prove our right and claim under every succeeding to.

ed, that the females (if circumcision effected it) were not then parties in the covenant; so that the proof is drawn only from the particular circumstances of the males; and with great propriety *they* bore the sign of God's covenant, through whom it was at last to be accomplished in the birth of the Messiah. You know that after the ascension of Christ, when the ends of the Mosaic and Abrahamic dispensations were answered, that the circumcision of children was prohibited. And can you be a stranger to the disgust and offence, which this gave to the Jews? Acts xxi. 20, 21.

As to Apostolical tradition. Are you unacquainted with the ingenuous concession of that learned Pædobaptist Dr. Whitby? Who
says

to the immunities of each preceeding dispensation. (3.) That whatever natural right we may grant to children under the *mosaic* and *abrahamic* dispensations: by the very nature and constitution of the gospel covenant, children or parents enjoy no natural claim or title to its privileges; but faith only gives them a right to the blessings of the christian covenant, *John*, i. 12, 13. *Gal.* iii. 26, with many other places. So that whether it be right or wrong, not "To initiate our children into the gospel covenant." We think we can support our neglect by a very good reason, *viz.* that we *cannot do* this for them: we can indeed sprinkle water on them; or wash them in that Element; but this we apprehend can never secure the blessings of a covenant, which is conditional; and the conditions of which, they cannot perform themselves; nor can we discharge those conditions for them. Besides we further think, that all the arguments from the usage of circumcision are inconclusive: till some text, or texts, be produced; which teach us to consider Baptism as a seal, sign or confirmation of the gospel covenant: in which light the blood of Christ *alone*, is to be viewed.

says, that Dr. Gale's very learned letters prove it to be doubtful and uncertain whether that practice did constantly obtain, till several hundred years after Christ. * Are you a stranger to the concession of Dr. Barlow, sometime Bishop of Lincoln? Who thus writes. " The truth is, infant baptism did
 " (how or by whom, I know not) come in
 " in the second century; and in the third
 " and fourth began to be practised; though
 " not generally, and defended as lawful by
 " that text grossly misunderstood." *John*
 iii. 5. §

You

* Dissert. de S. Script. interpretatione, prefat. §. 5.

§ *Grantbam's Friendly Epist.* p. 11. Here permit me to add the following remarkable passage from Mr. *Whiston's Life*, p. 177, 178. " Now the occasion of
 " my discovery of this antient error of the Baptism
 " of uncatechized infants, was a question put to me
 " by Mr. *Shelfwell*, when I was preparing to baptize him and a sister of his, who were good christians, excepting that they had never been baptized
 " before, whether I should not think it were better
 " if baptism were deferred till after instruction, than
 " used before it? My answer was this, that, I must
 " honestly confess, I should myself have thought so;
 " but, that I was no legislator, and so submitted to
 " what I then took to be a law of Christ. *Constitut.*
 " vi. 15. Do you also baptize your Infants and bring
 " them up in the nurture and admonition of God.
 " For, says he, suffer little children to come unto me
 " and forbid them not. When Mr. *Shelfwell* was gone,
 " I reflected upon what had been said, and was dissatisfied that I had been forced to allow, that in
 " my opinion, this law of Christ was not so right as
 " it should be: Whereupon, I immediately set myself
 " to examine what the *New Testament*, and the most
 " early Fathers meant by the words which they used,
 when

You say, that the Adult-baptizer has never been able to produce either *precept* or *precedent* for refusing baptism to his infant-children. Are you, Sir, upon your principles able to vindicate your denial of the Lord's Supper to infants? What precept or precedent can you produce for your refusing the bread and wine to infants? whom you consider as members of Christ's church, and

“ when they speak of Baptism of *infants* or *little children*, I mean *ἡλικία* and *παιδεία*, and which they esteemed not incapable of that holy ordinance; and
 “ I soon discovered that they were only those that were capable of catechetick instruction; but not fit for understanding harder matters; and that none but such *Infants* and *Little-children* were ever in the first and second century made partakers of baptism.
 “ This most important discovery I soon communicated to the world in this paper; (*i. e.* *Primitive Infant-Baptism revived*) which both Bishop *Hoadley* and Dr. *Clark* greatly approved; but still went on in the ordinary practice, notwithstanding, I sent this paper also by an intimate friend, Mr. *Haines*, to Sir *Isaac Newton*, and desired to know his opinion, the answer returned was this, that they both had discovered the same thing before; nay I afterwards found that Sir *Isaac Newton* was so hearty for the Baptists, as well as for the *Eusebians* or *Arians*; that he sometimes suspected these two were the *two witnesses* in the *Revelation*.” These great men, *Hoadley*, *Clarke*, *Haines* and Sir *Isaac Newton* discovered that according to the history of the primitive Ages of Christianity, Baptism followed instruction, and that none but such infants as had received instruction were baptized. Here you see the Adult-Baptizer has long since produced the argument you called for. And since Sir *Isaac Newton* indulged such honorable suspicions in favour of the Baptists: Dr. *Gill* may take shelter under that great name from the ironical and ungenerous satyr of your pen.

and initiated into the gospel covenant? by what authority do you make such a distinction of time between the observation of the christian rites? did not Baptism and the Lord's-Supper constantly attend and follow one another in the Apostolic age: and by what direction or example do you support the seperation you make between them? As for *us*, we need no precept or precedent for refusing baptism to infants; since, if the command of Christ and the practise of his Apostles have fixed and ascertained the nature, intent and moral uses of Baptism, they who by their age and capacity cannot answer its original intention and use, are necessarily excluded by those precepts and examples, which afford us a clear and determinate idea of the views and purposes of this institution; and we cannot but consider Baptism, as practised by us, as perfectly agreeable and consonant to the practise of it in the first age.

For, let the practise of that age and our sentiments and conduct be compared together. Now, in the subjects of it, it is the effect of instruction and the result of an acquaintance with the nature and effect of Christ's mission; so it was then. Now, it is founded on a personal conviction and belief, and flows from a desire of being interested in the important blessings of the gospel by a submission to its injunctions; so it proceeded from the same principles then. Now, it is an acknowledgement and profession of faith in Christ; so it was then. Now, it obliges the subjects of it, being

being *their own* act, to walk in all newness of life, and to purify their conscience from evil works, it answered the same moral design then. In the spring, the reason, the nature and the use of it, it is the same in both cases. Where then is the difference? Will a greater space of time, employed in receiving religious and christian instruction, make such an alteration in our circumstances, as to render the nature of Baptism different in our case, from what it was in theirs? They were instructed; so are we. They believed, and therefore were baptized, on this principle do we act. They professed their faith in Christ; so do we. They thus obliged themselves to a good life; so do we. Are not then the Scripture instances and examples on our side.

As to the hopes the Doctor indulges of the more universal prevalence of his opinion and conduct in Baptism; why, Sir, should you so unhandsomely introduce the indecency and indelicacy of the Age, as the source of those hopes? Every man, who thinks he has truth on his side, will anticipate the prospect of its universal and final influence under the auspices of the God of Truth. The Doctor, perhaps, founded his expectation on some particular, as well as this general reason. Within the compass of my own information and knowledge, there are not a few instances of learned and good men of late years, even after they themselves had practised it, who have disclaimed and refused further to perform the baptism of infants. For my own part, I rejoice in the thought, that that side which
acts

acts under the sanction of truth, which side soever it is, will finally prevail.

The reason, on which you build your judgement of the mode, permit me to say, appears to me to be a mistake and weak: *a mistake*; because that no instance occurs, where *water alone* was sprinkled for purifying, and the persons to be cleansed were expressly commanded to wash their flesh and bathe themselves in water, see *Ex. xxix. Lev. xiv. Numb. xix.* *Weak*:—against the united force of those arguments, which the word *baptizo*, the Scripture expression about the manner of administering baptism, the scripture allusions to baptism, and universal and ancient tradition, afford in favour of immersion. The arguments for this are so strong and convincing, that some of the most learned and zealous Pædobaptists have formerly acknowledged the conclusion that arises from them. Hence even Mr. *Baxter* confesses in his Annotations, that, “Baptism then was by *“washing the whole Body.”*”

Thus, Sir, have I followed you through your animadversions. If you are (as I would persuade myself you are) a lover of truth, you will readily join with me in recommending a serious and impartial enquiry into this subject, and will allow me as on the side of infant-baptism, to mention Mr. *Fleming's* tracts on Baptism, *Baptism of Infants, a reasonable service*, and *dipping not the only mode* of

* Vid. Annotations, *Mat. iii. 5.* Note (1.)

of baptism: so on the other side, Burroughs on positive institutions with the defence: Letters on baptism, to the author of the plain account of the Sacrament: Wilson's Manual: and Mr. Bulkeley's chapter on the subject in his Œconomy of the Gospel; as the best modern pieces in the controversy.

Now with my best wishes for your improvement in truth and goodness unto eternal life, I would subscribe myself, as bound by the strong and engaging ties of universal love and christian benevolence,

Sir,

Your affectionate,

October 19, 1765.

Humble Servant,

Benevolus Philalethes.

E

COPY

COPY of a LETTER,

Published in the *White-hall Evening-Post*,
September 17, 1747, with notes by the
 Author.

*And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth
 will I judge thee, Luke, xix. 22.*

S I R,

You have taken occasion from three Letters, addressed to you by the Rev. Mr. *White*, to revive and lay before the public what equally demands the most serious and disinterested examination of every person without, no less than within the pale of the national churches of *South and North Britain*, who truly calls himself a Protestant, *i. e.* a genuine Christian.

Of this denomination no man disbelieves; or will dispute the truth and importance of the following principles, which you have publickly avowed in your two answers and reply to the fellow of St. *John's* College, viz. “ That in *Christ's* church he is the
 “ only sovereign and head. He only hath
 “ power to decree ceremonies and rites, to
 “ fix terms of communion and authority in
 “ matters of faith; that no man, or body
 “ of men, have authority to command things,
 “ which *Christ* never commanded; to teach
 “ doctrines which he never taught; to enjoin
 “ terms

" terms of communion and *Rites of religious*
 " *worship*, which *Christ* never enjoined, *vid.*
 " *1st Answer*, p. 30. That *Christ* is the only
 " fountain of influence, jurisdiction and pow-
 " er in his church, by commission from
 " whom alone all its officers act, p. 27.
 " The church of *Christ* is a religious estab-
 " lishment, founded upon the scriptures, as
 " the only authentic rule of its doctrines and
 " worship, p. 21. Whatever visible society
 " then hath its terms of admissions, the qua-
 " lification of its members (*and rites of worship*)
 " fixed not divinely, but only by the will and
 " authority of men, cannot be (*in these*
 " *cases*) the truly catholic and christian church,
 " p. 20. The subjects of *Christ* are expressly
 " commanded, and charged by himself, (*their*
 " *great and only Lord*) to receive nothing as
 " doctrine, or part of religion, which are only
 " commandments of men, p. 30. And his
 " faithful subjects by the allegiance they owe
 " to him are obliged to *enter their protest* against
 " such usurpation, and to stand fast in the li-
 " berty wherewith *Christ* hath set them free,"
 p. 16.

On these catholic principles, (which are no
 other than the genuine records and canon law
 of the *New Testament*) you have abundantly vin-
 dicated the lawfulness and duty of your peace-
 able seperation and dissent from the national
 church of *England*; the particular and discrim-
 inating constitution of which, you have shewr
 (as I verily believe) to the necessary and full
 conviction of your impartial readers, to be dif-

ferent, and in many important points, incompatible with the constitution of the church of Christ, *vid. 1st Answer*, p. 20 to 34.

This heavy charge is not confined to the national church of *England*, as by law established. For whoever will permit himself to look through the spectacles of common sense and honesty into the constitution, or history of the several particular churches in *christendom*, even from *Rome* to *Edinburgh*, must needs see, that the wealth and power and ministry of the clergy, established by law in each national church, have been made to depend on the decrees and licence of their superiors; who have always required their solemn declaration, subscription and conformity to the articles and creeds, to the worship and government, which have been framed and imposed upon them by fallible and interested men, as the necessary introduction and tenure of church preferment.

The church of *England* has no more than her common share in the guilt and injuries occasioned by these unscriptural and antichristian demands, which in a great measure are removed, or at least very happily qualified by an act of toleration to all protestant dissenters in *South* and *North Britain*, who avow their civil allegiance due to the prosperity and security of the government: by whose equity and moderation they hold the protection and exercise of their civil rights and religious liberties.

Every

Every christian is, indeed, bound by his allegiance to the christian lawgiver, and in regard to his own best improvement and happiness to become a member of *that* church, whose constitution and worship he deliberately judgeth to be most conformable to the prescription and authority of the gospel, so far as the convenience of his situation will reasonably allow him: and wherever a loyal subject of his Majesty King *George* apprehends the ministry of a clergyman, established by law, to be less promising to answer to *himself*, the great purposes of christian association, the moderation and good sense, the honour and authority of our late and present governors, tolerate a dissent, and vindicate all those who exercise that religious liberty, with which the laws of God and *Christ* and reason have immutably invested them. And it is truly deplorable, that any fellow of a college, in an *English* university, should expose the defect of his understanding and modesty by charging *that* non-conformity as an act of disobedience to the civil magistrate, which is notoriously vindicated by the *very same authority* from which the national church of *England* derives its existence, and is still depending for its legal constitution and revenues.

But an author of your character wants not to be informed, that a conscientious dissent and peaceable seperation from the national church of England, is no demonstration of your own conformity to the authority and constitution of the church of Christ. And,

“ as

“ as you have spent your whole life among the
 “ dissenters, are acquainted with a great number
 “ of their churches and ministers,” p. 18, it
 cannot have escaped your own observation, or
 experience, that in the *conventicle* no less than
 in the *parish-church*, an authority has been
 claimed and exercised, “ to command things,
 “ which Christ never commanded, to teach doc-
 “ trines which he never taught, to enjoin terms
 “ of communion, and rites of religious worship,
 “ which Christ never enjoined,” p. 30. all which
 shall be fairly exposed to the world, when-
 ever you shall think fit publicly to demand
 it. *

In the mean time the writer of this letter,
 recommends to your impartial consideration,
 the following *specimen of his ability*, to return
 the *same charge upon the dissenters in general*,
 which you have published, and in his opinion
 made good, against the constitution and wor-
 ship of the national church of *England* in *par-
 ticular* : by referring you to two paragraphs in
 your second answer to Mr. *White*, wherein you
 say, “ It is the opinion (you mean the *general*
 “ opinion and *practice*) of the dissenters, that
 “ when an infant is brought to be entered by
 “ baptism into the family, or church of God,
 “ and a solemn vow and engagement is to be
 “ made before the church for its religious
 “ education, that the parents whose child it
 “ is, and to whom both God and nature have
 “ committed its education ; that those (*you say*)
 “ are the proper persons to stand forth, and
 “ take

* See the Postscript.

“ take upon them this great and important
 “ trust ; and to bind themselves by a solemn
 “ vow faithfully to discharge it,” viz. 2d
Answer to White, p. 2. and in p. 10. you
 thus proceed. “ As for the open and solemn
 “ renewal of the baptismal covenant before
 “ God and many witnesses, which (Mr. White
 “ had said) baptized persons ought to make
 “ when they come to years of discretion—
 “ This (*you answer*) they (i. e. the baptized
 “ persons) make with us (dissenters) in the
 “ other sacrament of the supper which *Christ*
 “ *himself has appointed, and which is the only*
 “ *institution his wisdom has thought fit to appoint*
 “ *for this purpose.*”

In these two paragraphs you have made
 yourself *personally* accountable, and you are
 hereby solemnly called upon, as an avowed
 dissenter, and both the publisher and advocate
 of their general and daily practice *in this case*,
 by virtue of the allegiance you owe and *profess* to
 the christian lawgiver ; and in order to purge
 yourself from the guilt and injury of teaching for
 doctrines the commandments of men : to point
 out to your christian brethren the particular place,
 or places, in which it is expressed and may be
 found in that holy bible, which the great *Cbilling-*
worth truly called, *the only religion of protestants.*

1st, That infants are to be brought and
 entered by baptism into the family or church
 of God, and how it is possible for this to be
 done, according to your own apprehension,
 “ if you continue to think it essential to
 “ the idea a of church, that it is a society of
volunteers,

“ *volunteers*, a company joined together in
 “ certain acts and *professions* by *common consent*,
 “ and that without, much less, *against his own*
 “ *agreement* and *consent*, no man can with
 “ any truth be stiled a member of *any church* :”
 all which you have expressed as your own
 thoughts and words in your second answer,
 p. 84.

You are farther obliged and solemnly charged by the occasion and authority aforesaid, to mention the text or texts in the *new testament* of *Jesus Christ*, wherein it is expressed and may be found.

2dly. That the baptism instituted by *Jesus Christ* is a *social act of christian worship*, in which others are *personally* concerned, together with those who administer and receive it, which is to be done and repeated, (you say openly and solemnly renewed) in the church before God and many witnesses; * and to inform the world (in proof of this assertion) in what church of *Christ* his inspired evangelist *Philip* administered this rite of revealed religion to the treasurer of the queen of the *Æthiopians*, and what members of that church were then and there present, as witnesses of this sacred transaction. You are farther obliged and required by and from the authority of God's holy word to shew.

3dly, That at the time (and *in connection with the act*) of administering baptism to an infant

* See the Postscript.

infant, a solemn vow and engagement is to be made before the church, for its religious education.

4thly, That it is the (*express*) will and appointment of the christian lawgiver, that the parents of the child, or infant so baptized, are *at that time*, and upon the same account, to stand forth and take upon them this great and important trust (viz. of its religious education) and to bind themselves by a solemn vow faithfully to discharge it. *

Finally, you are required and obliged to shew from the declaration and evidence of the holy scriptures themselves (which are the *perfect and only authoritative rule* in all acts of revealed religion.)

5thly, The obligation therein laid upon all baptized persons, when they come to years of discretion, to receive the Lord's supper,
 " for the open and solemn renewal of their
 " baptismal covenant, before God and many
 " witnesses, which other sacrament of the
 " supper (you say expressly) *Christ* himself has
 F " appointed

* Is it not apparently insignificant for the sureties (parents, godfathers or Godmothers) to stand forth and take upon themselves this great and important trust, before the life or capacity of the children to receive a religious education can be known? would it not have a better aspect and more promising effect for parents, &c. to bind themselves by a solemn vow, faithfully to discharge this trust at the proper season of its operation, rather than suffer the impression of this vow to be effaced by time, or totally prevented by the death of the sureties?

“ appointed and is the only institution” (*i. e.*, exclusive of all other ordinances and acts of christian worship) “ which his wisdom has “ thought fit to appoint for *this* purpose.

If the supper of our Lord be the *true* and *only* institution appointed by himself for this purpose (“ *as you have affirmed in the face of the world*”) you are capable and personally obliged to shew, where this appointment is to be found in the *new testament*, wherein the apostles of *Jesus Christ* have recorded to all future ages, the whole council of God, and have *kept back nothing from his church* that was profitable to it, *Acts* xx. 20.

This discovery is indeed necessary to justify the *opinion* and *practice* (of *by far* the greater part) of *protestant dissenters* from the church established by law; but which discovery, whenever you make it, will be *no less* unexpected and astonishing to many of your protestant brethren, than it will be even to *yourself*, when the Rev. Mr. *White* shall produce a text of scripture, proving the same institution of our Lord’s supper, to be lawfully and originally intended to be used as a civil qualification for an employment in the *custom-house*, or a command in the army.

These high demands are all grounded upon your *own avowed* principles, they are taken from your *own account* of the general opinion and practice of the dissenters, whom you have consequently and publickly charged with using the two positive institutions of the great christian

christian lawgiver (not according to the instructions and authority of his own gospel, but after the fashion, the arbitrary, fluctuating customs of *this world*, and the wantonness of superstition.) It becomes you, who have brought this public and heavy charge upon the *greater part of protestant dissenters* from the church of *England* to wipe it off; either by your public acknowledgment of the truth and justice of this charge, or by your *fair and honest* refutation of it.

Your silence to this demand must cost you *the reputation* and peace of a *consistent protestant*. The heavy blows you have dealt to Mr. *W—*, will then rebound upon your own head, and your two answers and reply to his three letters, will be for ever quashed by his sentence, who *spoke as never man spake*. And *why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? and how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite; first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye*, Mat. vii. 3. 4. 5.

Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth, Rom. xiv. 22. which happiness that you may experience in this world, and rejoice in the never ceasing fruits

of it in the world to come, I most heartily wish you, with the true affection and sincerity of a christian,

VERAX.

ie. R. Harrison.

POSTSCRIPT.

In his third letter*, the dissenting gentleman says, p. 26, " You (*i. e.* Mr *White*) endeavour to explain the matter by an infant in the lord of the manor's court, who by his attorney is admitted to his copyhold, and covenants to do homage for the same; or by an infant king, who hath some one of the nobility, who in his name and for his benefit is appointed to take the coronation oath, and thereby oblige him to ob- serve the laws and protect his subjects, &c. But these instances (replies the dissenting gentleman) avail you nothing: for,

" 1st, The child, when admitted by his attorney in the lord's court to his copyhold,
" does

* The 3d letter to Mr. *White* appeared in 1748, wherein are repeated some of the same absurdities and *self-contradictions*, which disgraced the dissenting gentleman's second epistle, in defiance and without the least notice taken of the *too well grounded* and interesting charge exhibited in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, Sept. 17, 1747: But this silent contempt of what is due to his own honour, no less than to the majesty and simplicity of the christian religion, is indeed a sad *specimen* of what a dissenting gentleman may be capable to write and meekly to bear.

“ does not covenant to do homage for the
 “ same.—That he does not covenant, *I prove*
 “ by a very plain and *incontestible* argument,
 “ which is, that he *cannot*.—There is *no sense*
 “ *at all, no religious, or moral sense* in which
 “ the *infant can*, with any *truth or propriety*,
 “ be said to covenant, No, it is the attorney,
 “ and he alone that covenants to perform the
 “ homage. And in case of a minor king,
 “ when one of the nobility takes the corona-
 “ tion oath in his name or stead (if any such
 “ ceremony be ever performed) he *does not*,
 “ *cannot*, in *any sense*, thereby oblige the
 “ royal infant to observe the laws and protect
 “ the subjects---Not whilst an infant---because
 “ *not being a moral agent, he cannot possibly be*
 “ *capable of moral obligation*.—And not when
 “ he comes of age, because the promise or
 “ oath of one rational moral agent can never
 “ properly oblige another, if that other was
 “ not at all conscious of, nor gave his assent
 “ to it. The whole nature and extent of the
 “ obligation in that case is unquestionably this,
 “ the nobleman who takes the oath as perso-
 “ nating the king, and who, during the mi-
 “ nority is vested with regal power, swears
 “ that he himself will, in the exercise of that
 “ power, observe the laws and protect the
 “ subjects.—The obligation of this oath, which
 “ is made by *himself only*, can extend *only to*
 “ *himself*, and it lasts only so long, as he con-
 “ tinues vested with regal power; but when the
 “ royal *infant comes of age* and assumes the
 “ power into his own hands, *he must personally*
 “ *take the oath*, or some way or other signify
 “ *his*

“ his solemn assent to it in order to his being
 “ laid under any *real* obligation by it : and
 “ then,

“ 2dly, These cases also widely differ from
 “ that of the baptized infant, because in both
 “ of them there are several important services
 “ and actions to be done (which must be per-
 “ formed by some one) whilst the minority
 “ continues. In the first, there are suits and
 “ services in the lord's court and quit-rents to
 “ be paid. In the other, there are acts of
 “ regal power to be continually exerted
 “ for the due government of the people,
 “ even whilst the infancy remains. These,
 “ therefore, being *indispensably* necessary to be
 “ done, and *the infant being utterly incapable*
 “ *of doing them* ; hence arises a necessity of
 “ some person undertaking to discharge these
 “ offices, and to act in the infant's stead. *But*
 “ *is there any thing like this in the case of bap-*
 “ *tized infants ?* Is there any service or ho-
 “ mage, any faith or vows which God expects
 “ from them, while their infancy lasts ? You
 “ know there is not. If God then expects
 “ no such services from the infants, *why are*
 “ *sponsors called forth to pretend to perform*
 “ *them for him ?* And this, when the pretence
 “ is in every view ridiculous, because, in
 “ *things of religion, it is utterly absurd for one*
 “ *man to pretend to promise, to repent, to believe*
 “ *in the name of another.*”

In his examination of these two cases, it is
 both well argued, and positively affirmed, by
 the

the dissenting gentleman, that through the incapacity of his knowledge and consent, *no infant can make, or be laid under any real obligation, by a covenant made in his name and stead by another person.* And this his own very plain and sound doctrine, concludes with the following appeal to Mr. *White*, viz. “ One principal
 “ design of the baptism of a child you own is,
 “ that some security be given, some solemn
 “ stipulation be made before the church for
 “ its religious education. Who then, I pray,
 “ so proper to give this security as the
 “ person to whom its education is com-
 “ mitted? Whom should the church bring
 “ under the engagement of a solemn vow or
 “ covenant for this purpose? Strangers who,
 “ perhaps, never saw the child, or who, when
 “ the ceremony is past, will never see it more;
 “ or the parents, in whose family it is to grow
 “ up, under whose eye it is to be formed?
 “ See 3d. Letter, p. 27, 28.

Thus we have it from this dissenting gentleman's own confession, and the doctrine that immediately goes before and follows his appeal to Mr. *White*, viz. that in the matter of infant baptism, one principal design (which none who have affirmed have ever yet attempted to prove*) is some security, some

solemn

* The solemn commending of an infant to God's blessing and the entering into a sacred vow for its religious education (whether by parents, godfathers or godmothers) is a description, a supplement and use of infant baptism and of a supposed rite of the christian religion; which none
 who

solemn stipulation given to and made before the church by the securities (whether *strangers* or *parents*) for its religious education; but in which security and solemn stipulation God is not the principal; nor can the baptized infant be in any possible sense a contracting or obliged party.

But, alas! this fair and strong reasoning is all forgot, where it became less convenient to remember it, for in p. 132, this same dissenting gentleman is found reminding Mr. *White*, "That the age is critical and discerning for the honour of the christian name; therefore, the dignity of christian bishops, all claims not clearly founded in scripture, or reason, and all offices and rites not evidently supported by them, should at least be silently dropt." And then in his own name, nay in the very same breath, proceeds this unhappy man.

"The only rite after baptism (*i. e.* of an infant) which I find either instituted or practised by *Christ* and his apostles to make a public recognition of our baptismal engagements in the face of a christian congregation

who have confidently asserted, have ever yet attempted to prove (so far as my knowledge or information reach) I am therefore free to declare, that since I began to consider and scruple the fact itself to this present hour, I have never been able of myself, or by the better assistance or information of any other person, to find one ray of evidence (in the book of God or in the writings of men) to enlighten or convince my understanding of the truth or probability of this positive assertion.

“gregation, is the celebrating the Lord’s supper: by this christians are openly to profess themselves the subjects and followers of *Jesus Christ*, to recognize their baptismal covenant, &c.” *i. e.* according to the preceding and avowed doctrine of this same dissenting gentleman, not more than three pages before; baptized infants, when of age, are by the use of our Lord’s supper, to *renew engagements they never made, to repeat what was never done, and to recognize their baptismal covenant, into which the incapacity of their former knowledge and consent would not suffer them to enter.*

If, as he tells Mr. *White*, this dissenting gentleman has really found the Lord’s supper to be the *only* rite which *Christ* and his apostles have instituted for *this* purpose: he must be capable and obliged, as he is hereby once more solemnly called upon, to publish his discovery, and no longer to encourage (by his too obstinate silence) the ungenerous suspicion that he has found *this*: he is unable, or ashamed to tell where; otherwise this public and repeated ascription of the same ends and uses of one positive rite of the christian religion, for which the son and wisdom of God has in his gospel, distinctly enacted another, may oblige us to think or provoke some to say (in the words of this dissenting gentleman to Mr *White* on the account of sureties and answers) this business of celebrating the Lord’s supper as the only rite instituted and practised by Christ and his apostles, for a recognition of, &c.—“

G

“ impenetrable

“ impenetrable clouds, which till some new
 “ light shall arise, one may venture to pro-
 “ phesy, will never be dispelled, It turns
 “ the ceremony of *your* Baptism into little else
 “ than a solemn trifle, and furnishes to un-
 “ believers, matter of everlasting insult, con-
 “ tempt and ridicule.” 3d Letter, p. 30.

May the better *knowledge* and *discretion* of
 avowed christians *seasonably* correct this mani-
 fest abuse, and the kind providence of heaven
 effectually prevent this *unmerited* reflection, from
 contracting the influence of the most wise and
 salutary institution of religion, that has ever
 appeared in this, or in any age, whether the
most or the least critical and discerning.

May the time come speedily and never be
 gone! When the *New Testament* of *Jesus Christ*
 shall be in the profession and practice of every
 christian, his perfect, sufficient and only rule
 of faith, worship and obedience.

When the most obvious and profitable in-
 structions of the gospel shall be no more tor-
 tured, by the pride, or covetousness, the ig-
 norance and wickedness of its professors, to
 speak the sense of every party, and in the
 jarring language of each contending christian.

When the defenders and propagators of the
 best cause shall acquit themselves, on every
 side as worthy advocates! enquiring and ar-
 guing on the weighty subjects of our common
 christianity, not for the base interests or cre-
 dit of any party, but for their *own* better and
usual

mutual information ! Not prompted by a thirst of victory, but by their supreme reverence and love of truth ; not with the borrowed address and unfelt zeal of a lawyer, but with that generous simplicity and well-tempered ardor, which becomes a christian ! By such prudence, which neither begins nor ends in guile ; but flows from an honest charity and seeks the best means and occasions of executing the calm dictates of reason and the absolute demands of conscience.

When christians of *each denomination*, shall contend for no other faith than was once delivered from the mouths of the inspired apostles and evangelists to the saints their immediate converts, and afterwards completed and recorded in the *new Testament*, by these inspired and only authoritative ministers of our religion—for the sufficient and standing instruction, improvement and happiness of all succeeding christians, to the end of the world.

When they shall contend for this only true Faith, with the only Spirit which genuine christianity can inspire—in the words of truth (*i. e.* sincerity) and soberness, with a calm, meek and benevolent disposition—endeavouring no less to receive, than to give instruction and mutually to establish and improve our minds in the pure and useful faith of the Gospel.

Who

Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom! But, if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lye not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But, the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace, James, iii. 13—18.

F I N I S.



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